

PASTORAL CARE FOR KOREAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED
STATES EXPERIENCING CROSS-CULTURAL STRESS

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Tai Ki Chung

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TAI KI CHUNG,

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Howard Chubb

Chai-Hsi Kuo

April 4, 1983
Date

Joseph C. Haugh
Dean

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ABSTRACT

Most of the 650,000 Korean-Americans in the United States are in the beginning stages of immigration. They are experiencing severe stress, which according to research affects them for at least four to six years. This cross-culturally induced stress may destroy them unless they know or learn how to respond to it. I have seen, for nine years in this country, countless Koreans troubled because their inadequate response to the stressful environment produced a deteriorating holistic health.

The purpose of my project is to analyze the sociological and psychological background of the stress which they experience, and to propose avenues of care for these troubled persons. The study itself is a combination of academic and empirical methods. I used available theological theory based on human suffering; psychological theory focused on stress and crisis counseling; sociological data; and my personal experience.

God became a human being in Jesus Christ, suffered in the human experience, and expressed His nature as fellow sufferer Who understands the immigrants' pain. In Jesus' example of facing pain rather than shrinking from it, He left an example for us, demonstrating by His triumph over pain and death that victory in God is possible.

For Korean immigrants, the cross-cultural stress is inevitable short of a return to their homeland. The painful stress is a reality which they have to face. However, with a constructive response to it, the stress can contribute to their holistic health rather than to their mental, spiritual, and physical deterioration.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

More than 20,000 Korean people enter the United States every year, swelling a resident Korean population that is estimated at 650,000.¹ According to a survey conducted in Los Angeles in 1978, the majority of Korean-Americans are newcomers, i.e., first generation immigrants. The survey demonstrated that at that time, 51 percent of the Korean households had been established since 1975, only a three-year period.² One might fairly say that the majority of the Korean population is in the early stages of their new life.³

As with almost all other nationalities, most Koreans immigrate to the United States with optimistic ideas about this country, armed with unflappable hope and high expectations. Unfortunately, most do not anticipate the serious problems that they must face in cross-cultural adjustment. This phenomenon, which has been dubbed "culture-shock" by many, is compounded in a startling number of Korean cases by extenuating circumstances. A very large number of our people come here as spouses of military and business personnel, or as students forced to leave family behind because of visa restrictions. Therefore,

¹The Korea Times (Hankuk Ilbo, Miju News) (January 22, 1983.)

²Eui-Young Yu, "Koreans in America: Social and Economic Adjustments," in Byong-Suh Kim and Sang Hyun Lee (eds.) The Korean Immigration in America, (Montclair: Association of Korean Christian Scholars in North America, 1980) p. 75.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

culture shock is compounded by isolation from others who share the primary culture. In my nine years in the country, I have observed many people suffering severely from the above.

In such circumstances, it is normal that these individuals undergo stress during the adjustment process. However, in many cases, normal healthy stress is diverted or exaggerated into irrational psychological pain.

Where can these suffering people go for help? The answer is categorical: to Korean-American ministers who have themselves undergone adjustment. In this ethnic community, the ministers are primary resource persons, not only for spiritual matters, but also for mental/emotional and even practical problems.

According to Dr. Won Moo Hurh, over 68 percent of first generation Korean immigrants are either active members of or associated with churches.⁴ This high percentage of involvement reveals not only the awesome responsibility of the pastor, but also the tremendous opportunity for caring ministry.

However, the shouldering of the responsibility by Korean pastors has left much to be desired, not to mention the general failure to meaningfully redeem the opportunities.

It is true that the Korean churches are playing important roles in the community, but the problem of the relevance of Christian ministry for the immigrant community has been increasingly raised. There is a criticism in the community that the ministry of the Korean churches has little relevance to the immigrants who are in a

⁴Won Moo Hurh, "Cultural and Social Adjustment Patterns of Immigration in the U.S." (McComb: Western Illinois University, 1976) p. 23. (Mimeographed.)

different situation⁵ from the one in which they were before they came to America.

I agree. Most churches are not responding constructively to the pain of the immigrants. I believe that this is not because the pastors and churches do not care, but primarily because they do not know how best to respond. Most Korean pastors are themselves in a lingering state of culture shock, not having fully adapted to life in a non-oriental, technological society and hampered by feelings of inadequacy when facing these problems with others.

It is the purpose of this dissertation to address the crisis in the pastoral care of Korean immigrants. I will explore herein the roots of immigrant stress; then suggest avenues of constructive pastoral care for those suffering from abnormal strain. Specifically, I will explore how these suffering ones can learn both to cope with the stress and to strengthen themselves for future problem-solving.

THESES

My discourse is based on several bedrock suppositions. First, most Korean-Americans, as first generation immigrants, are experiencing some degree of extra-normal stress as a result of their cross-cultural environment and adjustment thereto.

Second, the effects of this cultural strain added to that generated by the routine of daily life will ultimately be either creative or destructive. The primary determinant in this outworking process is the

⁵Chang Soon Lee, Growth Ministry in Korean Immigrant Churches (Los Angeles: New Korean Printing Co., 1979) p. 2.

knowledge and use of creative stress management.

Third, crises in individuals populating the Korean-American community are most often a result of inadequate or improper response to stress situations.

Fourth, these new Americans, as resilient human beings, have great capacity to bear the stress and grow in it, spiritually and mentally, if they are nourished with constructive care.

Lastly, the Korean-American congregation, as a community of Christian love led by a knowledgeable and caring pastor, can provide both the nourishment of and context for this constructive concern.

METHODOLOGY

This study has made use of a combination of academic and empirical sources. Theological and psychological theory, sociological studies, and personal experience have all been employed in the definition and theoretical resolution of the stated problem.

To limit the study, I have chosen to restrict consideration in this treatment to the pastoral care of abnormally stressed first generation Korean immigrants in the United States and to those not newly settled but who have moved into later stages of the process of adjusting to the new environment.

Chapter II

A THEOLOGY OF SUFFERING

BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE SUFFERING OF GOD

The idea that God suffers with His people rests squarely on the Biblical revelation, particularly the reality of the passion of Jesus Christ.

This concept can be traced directly to the heart of the single most important event in Old Testament history. The Exodus is portrayed as the response of a caring God to the misery and oppression of His covenant people (Exodus 3:78; 33:14-15; Numbers 10:35-36). There is even an overtone of His participation in the suffering which prompts His intervention.

The covenant involvement of Yahweh on this level created a condition in the religious consciousness of Israel that can only be termed unique to the ancient world. From the early social judgements in the Book of the Covenant to the post-exilic prophets, Israel's obligation in the covenant that was born out of God's suffering love was not primarily cultic; rather, it was to be a people who were sensitive to the issues of justice for suffering, defenseless people.

This was heightened by an awareness of God's nearness. His concern about the misery of the chosen people was never the waiting sympathy of an uninvolved onlooker. His was the pain of One who was directly affected, a burden lifter. God came not only to the special and privileged; he came to the rebellious, zealous, and suffering men of

His choice (Genesis 11:5; 18:21; Exodus 21:8).

The New Testament view begins and ends with the suffering of the God-man. The passion of Jesus is one of the pillars of the Gospel message. Jesus said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things" (Mark 8:31). Jesus' story is a history of suffering and pain, rejection and humiliation, ridicule and shame. He was indeed a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.

However, the suffering of Jesus was not borne for His own good. He was the bearer of suffering for God, intentionally laying aside a right to impassibility and grasping the burden set before Him.

Two connections, of theological . . . as well as religious importance, are imbedded in the Pauline and Johanne writings respectively. The first is that at the center of the Gospel stands the Cross, not of a man, but of the Son of God who had taken upon Himself the form of a Servant and given Himself to death for men; the second is that Jesus, Who is the Son of God, has come in the flesh, a coming which is also described with direct reference to the passion as coming in blood.¹

Jesus said, "I am the vine and you are the branches" (John 15:5). By it He meant that God is the ground of our being as humans. When we are in pain, God is in pain.

In Jesus, God is perceived as being among us. In the Gospel of Matthew, this truth is a main theme. From the angel's naming of Mary's child as "Emmanuel" (1:23) to the pronouncement of ever-presence by the Risen Lord (28:20), "God with us" is warp and woof of the Matthean understanding of the nature of God. He develops the idea particularly in relation to the sufferers. For example, in the person of

¹J. K. Mozley, The Impassibility of God--A Survey of Christian Thought (Cambridge: University Press, 1926) p. 7.

those who hunger and those who are strangers, those who go naked in the world, those who are sick, or imprisoned--to these who are in pain, God is present. He suffers when people suffer.

In bitterly trying circumstances, as well as in promise of deliverance from those circumstances, He is present and knows our pain.

God's purpose is to meet us in every experience of life. The possibility of divine-human encounter is particularly real in the crisis experience of life. Every human experience is potentially revelatory. The ground of meeting between God and men is not fenced by ecclesiastical or dogmatic rivers; it is not prescribed by sex, race, class, or nation. The prerequisite for divine-human encounter is neither a particularly psychological disposition nor a state of emotional and physical health.²

THEOLOGICAL VIEW OF THE SUFFERING OF GOD

Theology of the Early Church

The Greek theology of the early church rejected any ascription of suffering to God on philosophical grounds. Having been influenced by Philonic thought and general cultural Hellenization, early Jewish-Christian religion passed into a Greek world. With this orientation, a trend toward philosophical theology grew, treating statements of God's suffering as merely metaphorical. God was assumed to be wholly free from the basic human emotions. A set of superlatives arose which reflected this: omniscient, omnipresent, immutable, etc. One specific adjective was used to directly address the issue of the suffering of God. Impassible was the term the theologians (especially the Scholastics) used to dispel the notion that God, as God, could suffer.

²Edward E. Thornton, Theology and Pastoral Counseling (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964) p. 27.

In a word, Christian theology, at least through the Medieval period, was characterized by a distinct aversion to the idea of a suffering God.

Empirical Theology

The Reformation and ensuing Counter-Reformation made unalterable changes in classical theology. The thought about the almost unapproachable Holy Other ever so slowly changed; so much so that recently, Christian theologians have taken God's essential kinship with the human situation seriously. Empirical theology has largely replaced the impassible God of the tradition with God as the "fellow sufferer Who understands,"³ rejecting essential transcendence while asserting God's involvement in His people's lives.

"In God is a sympathetic union of experience which responds to the feeling of others. The cross is a sign of the suffering God, and philosophy can't explain it."⁴ The sympathy of God means for Him to feel the feeling of His people, hurt in their pain, grieve in their sorrow, and rejoice in their joys. In loving, one enters the life of another on a vulnerable level. If God is love as the Bible affirms, He must also be vulnerable to His people's pain.

In suffering, a human being is "acted upon." "It is confrontation to requirements imposed by something which reshapes the self.

³Alfred N. Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Harper & Row, 1957) p. 413.

⁴Charles Hartshorn, Theology in Crisis (New Concord: Muskingum College, 1967) p. 42.

Suffering happens whenever living people are shaped by something which moves them from their present state."⁵

Empirical theology also makes new statements about the human experience. Humanly speaking, suffering might prevent the growth of the individual. However, it is also constructive when it awakens self-understanding, heightens a sense of personal identity, enhances one's creativity, and promotes communication and community.

In referring to this phenomenon, Daniel Day Williams insists that "in suffering we enter in special ways into the process of becoming personal histories."⁶ In other words, our suffering contains the possibilities that in the future we might become new beings through it, growing healthier by the threat to health.

Empirical theology unites the new line of thought about God and about mankind in its search for God's redemptive activity in the human situation. "What works in human existence, so as to bring suffering into creative communities of value, is not primarily human will, action, or design, but the action of God."⁷

How is this effected experimentally? Williams' Suffering and Being in Empirical Theology addresses the issue. He asserts that the most important function of human suffering is the imposition of critical self-awareness. A person often answers the plaguing "Who am I?"

⁵Daniel Day Williams, "Suffering in Empirical Theology," in Bernard F. Meland, (ed.), The Future of Empirical Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969) p. 181.

⁶Ibid., p. 189.

⁷Ibid., p. 190.

through it. Pain heightens this self-awareness.

"It is part through suffering that we begin to answer the question, 'Who am I?' We all know the heightened self-consciousness which goes with suffering. Even a minor pain can elicit a self-awareness which is otherwise diffused in activity or preoccupation."⁸

When we are aware of ourselves, it helps us discover our own reality, our own existence, and our own humanness. The self-awareness is an "indispensable factor in self-discovery, self-affirmation, and it can be the entry into a significant community of selves."⁹

Further, our self-awareness can help our frozen energy to be available for our active life in society. And it also helps us to release our creativity. In other words, we can grow toward the new possibilities through suffering and self-awareness.

So God's redemptive work in human suffering is the awareness of our present being, and growth toward new possibilities. To this, God calls us and undergirds us.

Empirical theologians further state that, when we objectify our suffering, the suffering can become a healing power. Through the counseling process or through another interpersonal encounter,

. . . we find that the relationship to which the feelings of one are taken into the consciousness of another without rejection, without fear, and in love, is a condition of the transformation of the self. In this sense, suffering is not only a symptom of disease, but it becomes a healing potency.¹⁰

The discovery of the other who bears the consequences of my suffering

⁸Ibid., p. 182.

⁹Ibid., p. 183.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 184.

and shares my condition is a powerful mode of personal communication and healing.

Some elements that help this come to bear are first, an objectification of the suffering in its representation in another. What one cannot objectify, one probably fears. Part of the power of healing lies in discovering another who can hear my story, experience my feeling, and not be destroyed by it. Suffering becomes constructive only when it participates in structures which have elements of strength for healing. It is the strength which transforms the situation, and thus not human strength.

The second element is the offer of community in spite of suffering. We know that suffering willingly accepted in communion with the other becomes a language of the self which can reach the other.

Third, there is the transformation which takes place in the meaning of suffering through love. Suffering with the other in love becomes a sacrament of the transmutation of suffering.¹¹

¹¹ Ibid., p. 189.

Chapter III

STRESS

Stress is a life experience. The pressures of competition at work, school, and in social circles create external demands upon us that shape the decisions we must make. Acceleration of the pace of life, the complexity of change which surrounds us, and the feelings of helplessness which confront many create the conditions for a kind of internal angst or anxiety which manifests itself in numerous ways in our lives. According to Schafer, "Stress is the response of mind, body, and sometimes behavior, to stressors."¹

DYNAMICS OF STRESS

Stress is essential for life, and any event in life can act as a stressor. The motivation to achieve and the pressure felt in achieving; the physical stimulus to respond to danger or a strange environment; the depression of an over-taxed body; the fighting of certain diseases and the contribution to others: all are results of stress. Nancy Gross suggests: "A stressless life would be a vegetable life, so monotonous, so tedious, so uneventful, so unrelievedly placid, that it would undoubtedly lead to the living death of utter and complete boredom."²

¹Walt Schafer, Stress, Distress and Growth (Davis: International Dialogue Press, 1978) p. 35.

²Nancy E. Gross, Living With Stress (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958) p. 42.

However, individuals will respond differently to the same stressors. A change in environment is experienced by all Korean immigrants in the United States. But they respond to it differently. For some it may be seen as a new challenge. For others it becomes a heavy and difficult situation with the possibility of failure. A given individual's ability to handle stressors may vary depending upon numerous factors: timing, place, previous experiences, spiritual well-being, and the environmental pressures upon him at a given moment.

As Gross emphasized, stress itself is an objective, measurable fact, but our reactions to it are highly subjective. The stress that makes one person ill can be exhilarating to another. Yet even these whose tolerance for stress is high will vary in their reactions to it, depending on its specific cause.

Stress affects the totality of a person. Selye has named the way we respond to stress, the "general adaptation syndrome."³ Lazarus called the same pattern "coping".⁴ While the specific reaction we make may be different, there is a general process which occurs. The body is changed as a result of stress. The change alters behavior. In the face of a stressor the mechanisms of the body cause hormonal and chemical changes designed to fight the stressors it faces. Such activity occurs in stages. In the first stage there is an alarm reaction. The physiological resources of the body are triggered to fight the stressors

³Hans Selye, The Stress of Life (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956).

⁴Richard S. Lazarus, Psychological Stress and the Coping Process (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966).

which are acting upon it. In the second stage there is resistance as the body adapts to its stressors by distributing their effects as broadly as possible throughout its mechanism. In the third stage there is exhaustion if the body is not successfully able to cope with the stressors which affect it. When stressors overcome the body's resistive reaction, illnesses such as ulcers, heart attack, high blood pressure, arthritis, and kidney disease occur.

There is ample support for the hypothesis that a correlation exists between stress and illness. "Authorities in both the United States and Great Britain have stated that as many as 70 percent of all patients treated by physicians in general practice may be suffering from conditions that have their roots in unrelieved stress."⁵ Selye believes that "the relationship between stress and a person's physical functioning is so close that the effects of stress on a person can be measured through changes occurring within the structure and chemical composition of the body."⁶

Dr. Thomas Holmes, Professor of Psychiatry at Washington University, conducted extensive research on the relationship of stress to physical health. In his early research, he concluded that the onset of certain illnesses such as skin disease, tuberculosis, heart disease, and some cancers correlates closely with significant changes in a person's lifestyle. Among these life-style changes named were moving to a

⁵Sheldon F. Greenberg and Peter J. Valletutti, Stress and the Helping Professions (Baltimore: Brooks, 1980) p. 53.

⁶Ibid., p. 54.

new house, divorce, and the death of a close relative.⁷

In other related research, Dr. Holmes and Richard H. Rake studied the relationship between changes in life situation and stress. They concluded that there is a direct relationship between the changes one experiences and the likelihood of illness. By studying the life-situation patterns of many different groups they have constructed a Social Readjustment Rating Scale whereby one can estimate the likelihood of serious illness based on changes in life situations.

The Holmes and Rake scale of life events provides one technique for identifying the impact of negative stress. For example, a person who has recently reconciled a marriage and changed jobs within the same period of time is under significant stress. Regardless of the positive or negative nature of the events, a high score on the scale indicates that a person may be prone to the physical, mental, and emotional problems associated with stress.

Each of the life events has been given a numerical value. If one totals the numerical values of all of the changes experienced in a given year, some general estimate of susceptibility to illness can be made. The higher one's total score, the greater the possibility of illness in the future. Blue Cross/Blue Shield estimates that a stress sum of more than 300 points accumulated within one year will result in a 90 percent chance of health change within two years, 150-300 points in a 50 percent change of health changes, and below 150 is a 30 percent chance.

⁷Ibid., p. 56.

Following is the Holmes-Rake scale:⁸

Table 1. Social Readjustment Rating Scale

Life Event	Mean Value
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital separation	65
4. Jail term	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation	45
10. Retirement	45
11. Change in health of family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sex difficulties	39
14. Gain of new family member	39
15. Business adjustment	39
16. Change in financial state	38
17. Death of close friend	37
18. Change to different line of work	36
19. Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
20. Mortgage or loan for major purchase (home, etc.)	31
21. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
22. Change in responsibilities at work	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home	29
24. Trouble with in-laws	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Spouse begins or stops work	26
27. Beginning or end of school	26
28. Change in living conditions	25
29. Revision of personal habits	24
30. Trouble with boss	23
31. Change in work hours or conditions	20
32. Change in residence	20
33. Change in schools	20
34. Change in recreation	19
35. Change in church activities	19
36. Change in social activities	18

⁸Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rake, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 2:2 (1967) 216.

Table 1. Social Readjustment Rating Scale
(Continued)

Life Event	Mean Value
37. Mortgage or loan for lesser purchase (car, television, etc.)	17
38. Change in sleeping habits	16
39. Change in number of family get-togethers	15
40. Change in eating habits	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Christmas	12
43. Minor violations of the law 11	

Persons can learn how to control the effects of stress. The advantage of learning how stress works is that one can become a more victorious Christian. Good physical care, the maintenance of disciplines which promote emotional health, and practicing Christian prayer and meditation are each stress relieving. Stress becomes a positive source of growth for those who live faith in this whole perspective.

STRESS AND CONFLICT

That leads to the question of the relationship between stress and conflict. The idea of stress has been applied to the human organism and its ability to adapt or cope with stressors. By analogy, it could be extended also to include relations between persons and within or between groups.

"The key to meaningful life is learning how to live with stress without distress."⁹ At times the stress of life becomes more than we

⁹Hans Selye, Stress Without Distress (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1974).

can bear. In such situations help is needed. Surely the Apostle Paul had such traumas in mind when he admonished the Christians of Galatia to "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).

When stress becomes dysfunctional for a person, it has effects upon others. The pressures spill from the lives of those stressed to those closest to them. Stresses lead to conflict with those held most dear and loved most deeply. Dr. Frederick W. Ilfeld, Jr., assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California-Davis, has found that the most stressful of life's events are marriage and parenthood--those realities closest to us.¹⁰ In the Korean immigrant society the Church is the first social grouping to experience the dysfunctions of persons living with unconquered stress. Rev. Chang Kil Moon analyzed the continuous conflicts of Korean immigrant churches, concluding that the stresses of Korean immigrants are the root of Korean churches' conflict.¹¹

Stress on the immigrant produces conflict not only in the church but also in family and among closest relatives. I like to say "the history of Korean immigrant society is the history of conflict."

¹⁰Ruth Stein, "Stress That Hurt the Most" San Francisco Chronicle (November 9, 1976).

¹¹Chang Kil Moon, "The Social Background of the Conflict of Korean Immigrant Church" The Korea Times (Hankuk Ilbo, Miju News) (March 18, 1982).

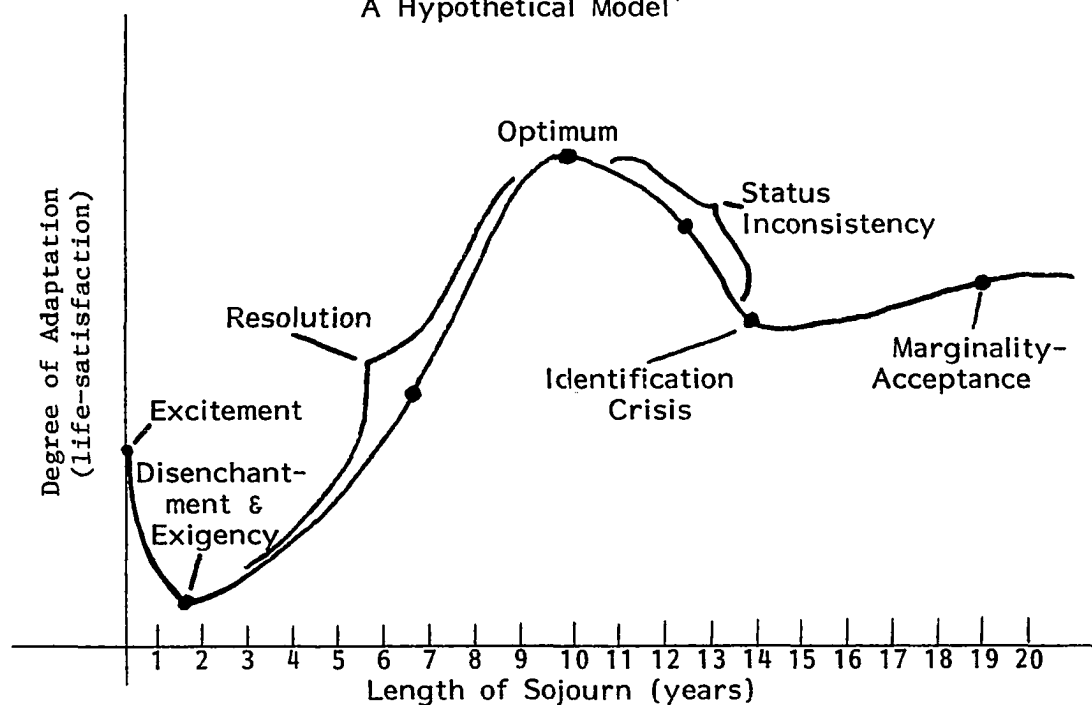
Chapter IV

AN ANALYSIS OF STRESS FACTORS AMONG
KOREAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

THE PROCESS OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

As I said in the introduction, most Korean immigrants are in the beginning stages of enculturation. Dr. Won Moo Hurh, Korean professor of sociology at Western Illinois University, divides the Korean immigrants' adaptation into seven critical periods: Excitement, Disenchantment and Exigency, Resolution, Optimism, Status Inconsistency, Identification Crisis, and Marginality-Acceptance.

Figure 1. Critical Phases in Adaptation Process:
A Hypothetical Model¹



¹ Won Moo Hurh, Comparative Study of Korean Immigrants in the United States: A Typological Approach (McComb: Western Illinois University, 1976) p. 45. (Mimeographed.)

The diagram shows that the most stressful period is during the disenchantment and exigency period which is usually experienced during the first few years. The focus of my dissertation is on this stressful period.

THE HURH PHASES OF ADAPTATION

To understand this second stressful phase more clearly, I will explain each stage briefly.

The first--the "excitement" phase--usually covers the initial several months after arrival in this country. Feelings during this period are curiosity and joy. Dr. Hurh explains in more detail:

A feeling of satisfaction, accomplishment, and relief that the immigrant has finally "made it" safely to the country he had dreamed of; . . . fascination about² the new surroundings, especially material affluence and comfort.

The second phase of disenchantment and exigency will be discussed below.

The third phase--resolution--involves the gaining of self-confidence and some degree of economic development.

The fourth phase--optimism--means revitalization of past aspirations. During this period, immigrants feel at home in relationships with white Americans.

The fifth phase--status inconsistency--is characterized by the transfer of peer-orientation to white Americans. Their life is compared with that of white America. Among the new peers, there exists a feeling of relative "deprivation, status inconsistency, perception of

²Ibid.

limited assimilation and social marginality."³ Finally, they are aware of "the reality wherein some are more equal than others in the land of liberty and justice for all."⁴

The sixth phase--identification crisis--involves the immigrants' discovery of "an immutable barrier (race) which blocks his or her way toward structural assimilation and over which he has no control."⁵ In earlier periods they hoped for "Anglo-conformity." The Anglo-conformity of which they dreamed now becomes an illusion.

The seventh phase--marginality of acceptance--indicates that cultural marginality is finally accepted.

Most pass through the above. The length of habitation of each phase depends on each person's ability to adjust to this new environment. Some immigrants may pass through a phase more easily than others do.

For most Korean immigrants, the second phase is devastating and affects the rest of one's life. According to the Korean-American Mental Health Center, of the more than 1,700 Korean immigrants treated in 1979, 54 percent of them were sick because of their struggle with this new environment. And most of them were in this second phase.⁶

³Ibid., p. 49.

⁴Ibid., p. 50.

⁵Ibid., p. 51.

⁶1982 Korean-American Mental Health Center's Report, quoted from The Dong-A Ilbo, Miji-Dong-A, October 1, 1980.

STRESS FACTORS IN PHASE TWO OF THE ADAPTATION PROCESS

As indicated above, the immigrant's excitement does not last long. Slowly an awareness of the great differences that exist between "me" and "they" develops. Everything may seem strange and incomprehensible, accompanied by the feeling that they cannot get through to anyone. A sense of apprehension, insecurity and stress is apparent in most. As a natural consequence of the continued inability to participate successfully in the American way of life, they feel the stress and frustration.

They face language difficulty, cultural difference, a conflicting value system and racial discrimination. These difficulties make them suffer under disenchantment and exigency. Usually, this kind of stressful feeling comes within the first year after arrival in this country.

Their dreams begin to fade when they are confronted with painful reality; language barrier; unemployment or underemployment; social isolation (loneliness for the elderly especially); culture shock in general.

Through these painful realities they begin to feel weakness and low self-esteem.

SPECIFIC STRESSORS

I will isolate several specific factors that contribute to the problems faced in Phase Two.

⁷Hurh, p. 46.

Geographical Transition. In moving from an Oriental to Western society, a host of transitions must be undergone. Transitions from familiar to unfamiliar places, from one set of friends to another, from one work setting to another, and many others all have their effect.

Language. Language barriers bring exceptional stress in Phase Two because of the social and economic pressures to conform. The problem is confounded because poor skills in English cause fear of performing basic survival tasks, such as travel and shopping. According to the 1978 Los Angeles Survey, 55 percent of the respondents identified their most difficult problem as language.⁸ The 1979 Joong-Ang Daily News Survey of the U. S. shows a similar view as the former. In this latter survey, 47 percent of the respondents said that the most difficult problem is the language.⁹ Isolation, fear, and frustration result.

Transition of Life Style. The new social and work environment requires certain changes with respect to traditional life style and ways of thinking. For example, the elderly begin to be aware of an attitude of indifference and disrespect toward the elderly in this country. Male-dominant sex roles and the authoritarian position of parents in the traditional Korean family cannot be maintained in the United States. This proves to be very different from the role of the elderly as the trusted and respected ones of the family and society they knew before. To compound the problem, young children born in the United States

⁸1978 Los Angeles Survey, quoted from Hurh, p.52.

⁹1979 Joong-Ang Daily News Survey of the U.S., quoted from Hurh, p. 53.

develop Western ways of thinking as well as Western life styles. But adult Korean immigrants stick to the old authoritarian values. Serious conflicts between generations arise, spawning increased stress.

Marital Stress-Factor/Family Role Conflict. Most Korean husbands bring with them the male-dominant role from Korea. In this Western culture, the authoritarian male-dominant position begins to be shaken. It causes stress between husband and wife. This stress often results in marital problems. According to the Pacific Asian Family Center, an average of five to six cases of spouse abuse are reported every day among Korean families in the Los Angeles area.¹⁰

Dr. Eui-Young Yu describes the reason clearly.

The high economic participation rate among Korean women weakens the male-dominant role of the traditional family. As women become partners in economic activity, they no longer obediently accept the superior position of males. Males, who are already faced with frustration caused by language difficulty, prejudice, and discrimination in employment market, find it difficult to tolerate their weakening position in the family. They are helpless when seeing their authority over their wife and children erode. Anger thus accumulated explodes between husbands and wives, between children and young parents. Two forces--the traditional authoritarian values and the new value system embedded in the equalitarian orientation--collide within family.¹¹

This kind of conflict, in many cases, leads to the breakdown of the family. In a word, the role conflict in the family causes a serious stress on all family.

¹⁰The Pacific Asian Family Center's Report, quoted from The Dong-A Ilbo, Miju-Dong-A, August 12, 1981.

¹¹Eui-Young Yu, "Koreans in America: Social and Economic Adjustments," in Byong-Suh Kim and Sang Hyun Lee (eds.) The Korean Immigrants in America, (Montclair: Association of Korean Christian Scholars in North America, 1980) p. 88.

Low Satisfaction with Work. Another serious stress factor is found in the fact that many Korean immigrants are not satisfied with their work, especially in the early years of their new life. There is a particular reason why many of them cannot be satisfied with their job. In order to understand it, one must look into their previous socioeconomic background.

Many surveys show that Korean immigrants often belong to the young, well-educated, middle--to--upper-middle class in Korea. Broad educational background and high occupational status is prevalent among the majority of recent Korean immigrants. The 1970 U. S. Census reported that among several races in the U. S., Korean immigrants have exceptionally high educational levels.¹² Other surveys also point this out. In 1973, the Asian-American Field Study surveyed the educational level of Koreans in the Los Angeles area. The Survey reported that "61 percent of the 358 sampled Koreans 25 years and over had completed at least four years of college."¹³ In 1978, there was a telephone survey in the Los Angeles area which revealed that "71.1 percent of the Korean household heads and 64.7 percent of their spouses had completed at least four years of college."¹⁴ The same survey discovered that "10 percent of the Korean house heads and 3 percent of the spouses held an M.A., M.S., or a Ph.D. degree."¹⁵

¹²1970 U.S. Census Report, quoted from Yu, p. 81.

¹³1973 Asian-American Field Study Survey, quoted from Yu, p. 82.

¹⁴1978 Telephone Survey by Joong-Ang Daily News, quoted from Yu.

¹⁵Ibid.

The 1978 survey of 116 Korean blue-collar workers in Chicago shows that "40 percent of the female and 58 percent of the male respondents completed their college education."¹⁶

As mentioned above, the majority of Korean immigrants are Korean born, having received their education in Korea. This means that they enjoyed social status in their homeland. But a considerable number of these suffer from low social status in this country. Often these highly educated people feel ashamed in their blue-collar jobs. In traditional Korean society, blue-collar workers belong to a lower class, while the white-collar people are respected highly. Compared with occupations held in Korea, it appears that Korean workers in this country tend to experience a downward occupational mobility at least in the initial period of settlement.

The 1978 Los Angeles Survey shows that "about 37 percent of the workers held jobs in the same occupational category both in Korea and in the United States. About 53 percent of the working household heads, however, experience some type of downward mobility. Among the former professionals, only 35 percent entered properting, and the rest went into lower occupational categories."¹⁷ According to the 1978 survey, 33 percent of the working heads and 40 percent of the working spouses expressed lesser satisfaction with their present job. And 14 percent of the working heads and 11 percent of the working spouses did have definite dissatisfaction with their jobs.¹⁸

¹⁶1978 Chicago Survey, quoted from Yu.

¹⁷1978 Los Angeles Survey, quoted from Yu, p. 85.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 86.

Judging from the situation described above, a considerable number of Korean-Americans do not find meaning in their work, thus lessening the vitality in their lives that satisfying work brings. This in turn affects their self-esteem. It means that their work situation leads them to stress.

Gap Between Ideals and Reality. Another factor causing stress is the immigrants' high expectations before coming to the United States. In Korea, they dreamed of their great future in America. Many of them came with expectations of a good and easy life. Therefore, they are not well prepared to face this complex and technologically advanced society. Contrary to their high expectation, the difficult reality makes them realize that they have a limited ability and opportunity. They begin to be aware of their false dreams and to struggle with day-to-day survival problems. This ideal-reality gap causes such serious stress that many of them are seized with an intense unhappiness along with physical illness and behavioral maladjustment.

Overload. The above factors affect individuals both mentally and physically, yet one more serious stress factor enters in. It is over-work. According to Rev. Chang Kil Moon's research about the social background of Korean church conflict,¹⁹ most immigrants think that they have to settle down financially within a few years after their arrival in this country. This way of thinking controls their way of life for several years. Thus, they work more than eight hours a day,

¹⁹Chang Kil Moon, "The Social Background of the Conflicts of Korean Immigrant Church" (Hankuk Ilbo, Miju News) (March 18, 1982).

making them feel stress physically.

Eui-Young Yu describes well the overload of Korean parents.

In critical stages of the initial adjustment period, parents must play the multiple role of parent, teachers, and friend to their children. Many parents do not appear to realize the necessity of these multiple roles and often do not play any one of them adequately.²⁰

Alienation. "America is a multi-racial society dominated by people with European antecedents and race has been an important factor affecting social relations."²¹ One survey conducted by Won Moo Hurh, Mei C. Kim and Kuang C. Kim, showed that "the high educational and occupational standing they enjoyed before their immigration has expedited their cultural but not their social assimilation in the U. S."²² Bogardus, in his Sociology and Social Research (1968), found that "the American people want even less (primary level) association with Koreans than with other Asian groups."²³ "Hurh, Kim and Kim (1978) argue that Koreans as an ethnic group seem to be accorded an extremely low social prestige by the Americans in general."²⁴

This data reveals that Korean immigrants suffer from alienation. The intensity of alienation is related to socioeconomic status. People occupying lower positions within the social structure most often express more severe feelings of estrangement. Having fewer opportunities to

²⁰Yu, p. 91.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

achieve life's goals, those at the lower status levels are exposed to the kinds of situations believed to result in more intense alienation. According to Josephson,

Alienation has been used to refer to a variety of psycho-social disorders . . . less of self, anxiety states, despair, depersonalization, rootlessness, apathy, social disorganization, loneliness, atomization, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, and the loss of beliefs or values.²⁵

APPLICATION TO SOCIAL READJUSTMENT-RATING SCALE

I applied the Social Readjustment Rating Scale to my church's 70 people (adults) who have lived in this country from one to five years. Out of 70 people, 17 totalled over 300 points, 21 of them expressed higher than 250 points, and the rest--over 200 points. If I had included language barrier, alienation, overload, gap between ideals and reality, and transition of life style, many of them would have scored higher.

Some of the most common responses were:

15. Business adjustment	39
16. Changing financial state	38
18. Change to different line of work	36
19. Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
26. Spouse begins work	26
28. Change in living conditions	25
31. Change in work conditions	20
32. Change in residence	20
36. Change in social activity	18
38. Mortgage or loan less than \$10,000	17
40. Change in eating habits	15

²⁵E. and M. Josephson, Man Alone (New York: Dell, 1962) pp. 12-13.

At present, 9 of the 70 (including two elderly people over 70 years) show physical and mental stress syndromes: arthritis, ulcer, and mental illness. The elderly people who have serious problems with the language barrier suffer especially from stress.

Chapter V

PASTORAL COUNSELING FOR THE STRESS OF KOREAN IMMIGRANTS

GOAL OF STRESS COUNSELING

Stress has always been considered in a negative way. But stress is not all bad. In small amounts it can be helpful. Yet, too much stress leads to physical breakdown, emotional problems, and difficulties in personal relationships. Stress can limit or enlarge one's potential. When one reacts to stress destructively, it becomes a negative power. When one handles it properly, it can be good for health and growth. Stress is a fork in the human growth road. If one learns to deal with stress constructively, he will develop new personality skills for controlling future stress. Howard Clinebell says "The human personality is like a muscle. If we use it to cope with difficulties, it grows stronger. If we avoid using it, by various escape mechanisms, it grows weaker."¹

The goal of stress treatment is to facilitate the holistic development of his or her potentialities. If I assume that Korean immigrants are in the prison of stress and distress, the goal of stress treatment is to help the person gain the strength and perspective which will allow him to use his personality resources more effectively in coping with his or her life situation. Further, the goal of stress counseling is

¹Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Contemporary Growth Therapies Resources for Actualizing Human Wholeness (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981) p. 141.

to help

. . . people achieve liberation from their prisons of un-lived life, unused assets, and wasted strengths. Here the counselor is a

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liberator, an enabler of a process by which people free themselves to life more fully and significantly. Through this freeing experience people discover that happiness is a by-product of actualizing their constructive potential. Mental--spiritual--relational health is the continuing movement toward living more fully, joyfully, and productively.²

The mental--spiritual--relational health (holistic health) is something we all want. But this holistic health does not just happen. We must take positive action to achieve and maintain good mental, spiritual and physical health. Understanding and learning to control stress and distress is an important step toward holistic health. Healthy people know how to live with stress. They do not avoid it. But they know how to pace themselves, to relax, and to recognize their own stress limits.

Unhealthy people often take on too much stress. They are tired under pressure or react to stress in ways that are destructive to their health. Learning about stress and its constructive management can help mental, spiritual and physical health grow. Knowing about stress is equally vital to self-development and to becoming a more healthy person.

Controlling stress and channelling it constructively is crucial to the full development of Korean immigrants' potentialities--in mind, feelings, body, talents, ability to live.

²Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Growth Counseling: Hope-Centered Methods of Actualizing Human Wholeness (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979) p. 18.

For Korean immigrants, their strange environment is enough to produce a serious stress level. A considerable number of them try to accept this stressful environment as a challenge. But some of them try to escape from this stress. In this thesis, the goal of stress treatment is to help them understand their own stress by seeing how it relates with the way they live and to help them grow toward their holistic health.

METHODS OF COUNSELING

There are many therapeutic ways of counseling. Among them, this paper will focus on the supportive counseling method. It is because "a pastoral relationship becomes 'supportive counseling' when the methods of supportive counseling are employed to help an individual, couple, or family cope with a particular problem or crisis."³ In supportive counseling, counselors employ several effective counseling methods which

. . . stabilize, undergird, nurture, or guide troubled persons, enabling them to handle their problems and relationships more constructively within whatever limits are imposed by their personality resources and circumstances."⁴

The following procedures are mainly based on the methods of supportive counseling methods as outlined by Howard Clinebell in Basic Types of Personal Counseling.

³Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, 1961) p. 141.

⁴Ibid., p. 140.

Building an Empathetic Rapport. The initial step for counseling a person under stress is to build an empathetic relationship. As it is in any counseling, it is necessary for a pastor to establish a relationship of trust and understanding. "The trustable quality of the relationship permits the person to deal with repressed, threatening feelings, fantasies, and memories."⁵ Through this quality of relationship to the pastor, the parishioners are able to produce his or her inner strength. By this strength they are able to cope with the stressful situation constructively. Rollo May describes this kind of trustable relationship as empathetic rapport: " . . . feeling, or the thinking, of one personality into another until some state of identification is achieved."⁶

Pastor as counselor works basically through the process of empathy with and strengthening the parishioner. The two enter into a unique relationship in which the strengths and resources of the parishioner are mobilized through the empathy and guidance of the pastor. The framework for this mobilization is the encounter or "happening" between the two. In the security of this new relationship, new perspectives are gained not only on the crisis which the parishioner is experiencing, but more importantly on the personal and community resources, the coping mechanisms, which are available. The psychological stability of the counselor, his clarity, his courage and strength of will, will be communicated to the troubled parishioner, thus lending him or her great assistance in his personality struggle.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1978) p. 77.

For this empathetic relationship. Howard Stone suggests "attending behaviors and listenings." For Stone "attending behaviors are those physical acts of the minister which help to produce a relaxed and comfortable environment for the parishioner and communicate the interest and concern of the counselor."⁷ Attending behaviors include showing nourishing behavior, posture of facing the parishioner and of leaning forward slightly to him or her, and looking into the eyes of the parishioner.⁸

Listening is also an essential part in building an empathetic rapport. According to Stone, for an effective listening, first the pastor or counselor needs not to allow himself or herself to be distracted by other thinking (such as thinking of the past). Second, the pastor needs to vary his or her attending behavior to make it congruent with what the parishioner is expressing. In other words, the pastor needs to feel free to cry with his or her parishioner who is communicating something sad, and to laugh and rejoice with the parishioner when they are talking about something joyful. Third, the pastor needs to know what he or she is listening for. Fourth, the pastor needs to narrow the focus of the communication.⁹

Gratifying Dependency Needs. The pastor needs to help the troubled parishioner gratify "dependency needs." Most Korean immigrants often

⁷Howard W. Stone, Crisis Counseling (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973) p. 33.

⁸Ibid., pp. 36-37.

⁹Ibid.

feel alone and helpless. They are looking for someone upon whom they can lean. They expect their pastor to be a "good parent" who has two functions:

. . . 'mothering,' which includes comforting, sustaining, feeling (emotionally), and inspiring; and 'fathering,' which includes guiding, protecting, instructing, and setting dependable limits to prevent self--or other--damaging behaviour.¹⁰

Emotional Catharsis. Pastor as counselor needs to accept the immigrant's painful feelings and in turn to help him express the feeling. Expression of one's painful emotion reduces the harmful stress that inhibits the problem-solving abilities. Clinebell says that "to sense that a respected authority person knows and cares about one's inner pain gives a troubled person powerful feelings of having his life undergirded."¹¹ This kind of healing relationship helps the troubled person grow toward a new life. Daniel Day Williams mentions in his empirical theology that "the relationship in which the feelings of one are taken into the consciousness of another without rejection, without fear, and in love is a condition of the transformation of the self."¹²

Objective Review of the Stress Situation.¹³ I have counseled Korean immigrants for over five years, both in and out of the church. Many of them are suffering because of their narrow perspective. It is im-

¹⁰Clinebell, Basic Types, p. 141.

¹¹Ibid., p. 141-142.

¹²Daniel Day Williams, "Suffering and Being in Empirical Theology," in Bernard E. Meland, (ed.), The Future of Empirical Theology, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969) p. 187.

¹³Ibid.

portant for the troubled immigrants to gain objectivity in viewing their painful reality. The pastor in counseling needs to help those suffering immigrants to face their "problem with a wider perspective and to explore feasible alternatives."¹⁴ This helps them make a wiser decision concerning what can and should be done.

COPING ACTIVELY WITH THE PROBLEM¹⁵

In coping with the problem I follow Howard W. Stone's crisis counseling. In a sense, immigrants experience a crisis in the process of their adjustment to a strange environment. In this crisis, many of them feel paralyzed by feelings of defeat, fear of failure and damaged self-esteem. The pastor needs to help these troubled persons to set up future plans, to find and use helpful resources, and to take action.

Setting Up Future Goals. This task is to help the troubled person function as high or higher than before. The goals determine the direction in which the counseling will proceed and toward which the courses of action will be aimed.

It is always best to be as specific as possible in defining goals, and to define them in observable terms so that their achievement is measurable. It is far more helpful to establish small and short-term aims, and attain them, than to set up lofty, long-term goals which can't be reached and will only bring disappointment.¹⁶

Using Resources. When the goal is set up, the pastor needs to help

¹⁴Clinebell, Basic Types, p. 142.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Stone, Crisis Counseling, p. 42.

find internal and external resources. "The internal resources are those methods of coping which all of us have within us, upon which we can draw in the face of the problems we encounter each day."¹⁷ Troubled persons do not often know that they own the ability to manage the stress. In this case they need to discover the history of their own handling of past stressful events. External resources include "such things as friends, family, church, spiritual resources, community groups and finances."¹⁸ Troubled persons tend to be isolated and to feel alone. In this case the pastor can help through many kinds of resources such as church worship, prayer group, small group, Bible study group, age-level fellowship groups, etc.

I have had a good experience with this type of growth group. There are 15 elderly people in my church. When I took over the church last year (14 months ago), most of them were sick and powerless. There were several reasons. The first was their serious language barrier. The second was that each of the elderly persons stayed at home alone Monday through Friday while the other family members were at work. The young couples and children often did not get along with the elderly ones even at home. The elderly person of each family was becoming sick and powerless. I realized this and immediately organized them into a support group. We met every Saturday for six to seven hours. I helped them through the above counseling methods. To my surprise, 13 of them are now healthy and strong, active in the

¹⁷Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁸Ibid.

church. I heartily recommend the growth group for management of immigrants' stress.

READING THE SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

The counselor's distinguishing mark is his or her great sensitivity to clients, their hopes and fears and tensions. Especially the pastor as counselor needs to be sensitive to all the little expressions of character such as nervousness, fear, facial expressions, the tone of voice, and the details of the troubled person's daily life. The pastor--counselor can read those characteristics by paying attention to all expressions, and responding to the expressions, especially since there are many signs of a person under much stress.

The most common symptoms of stress can be easily recognized, and warn the individual that his or her body, mind, and emotions are not reacting positively to the strains and tensions of life. When under stress, an individual may experience a variety of malfunctions within the vulnerable parts of the body. These serve as warning signs or symptoms of negative stress. Selye presents warning signs in his book, The Stress of Life.¹⁹

General irritability, hyperexcitation, or depression
 Dryness of the throat and mouth
 Impulsive behavior, emotional instability
 Inability to concentrate, general disorientation
 Feelings of weakness, dizziness, loss of reality
 Fatigue
 Floating anxiety, irrational fears
 Emotional tension, sense of being "keyed up"
 Trembling, nervous tics
 Tendency to be easily startled

¹⁹Selye, The Stress of Life.

Nervous, generally high-pitched laughter
 Stuttering and other speech difficulties
 Tooth grinding
 Insomnia
 Sweating
 Frequent urination
 Diarrhea, indigestion, stomach ailments, vomiting
 Migraine headaches
 Premenstrual tension, abnormal menstrual cycles
 Lower back pain, neck pain, chest pain
 Loss of appetite, compulsive eating
 Excessive smoking, increased smoking
 Increased use of prescribed drugs
 Alcohol dependency, drug addiction
 Nightmares
 Neurotic behavior
 Psychoses
 Accident-prone behavior

Tressider, in his book, Feel Younger, Live Longer, divides the symptoms into physical signs and mental signs. This division is an effective way of categorizing the typical signs of stress.²⁰

Physical Signs

Excess weight, with consideration of height and age
 High blood pressure
 Lack of appetite
 Impulsive eating at the first sign of a problem
 Frequent heartburn
 Chronic diarrhea or constipation
 Loss of sleep
 Constant fatigue
 Daily need for medication such as aspirin
 Frequent headaches
 Muscle spasms
 Sense of "fullness" without having eaten
 Shortness of breath
 Tendency toward fainting or nausea
 Tendency toward sudden outbursts of tears or an inability to cry
 Frigidity, impotence
 Excessive nervous energy

²⁰Tressider, Feel Younger, Live Longer

Mental Signs

Constant feeling of uneasiness
Irritability toward family and associates at work
General sense of boredom
Recurring feelings of hopelessness in coping with life
Anxiety about money
Irrational fear of disease
Fear of death
Feelings of suppressed anger
Inability to laugh easily and openly
Feelings of rejection by family members
Feelings of despair at failing as a parent
Feelings of dread toward an approaching weekend
Reluctance to vacation
Sense that problems cannot be discussed with others
Inability to concentrate or to complete one task before
beginning another
Fear of heights, enclosed places, thunderstorms, or
earthquakes

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION: PRINCIPLES IN STRESS
COUNSELING FOR KOREAN IMMIGRANTS

People should then rejoice in suffering, strange as it sounds, for this is the sign of the availability of energy to transform their character. Suffering is the nature's method of indicating a mistaken attitude or way of behavior, and to the objective and non-egocentric person, every moment of suffering is the opportunity for growth.¹

God shares the suffering of his people in exile, in prison, in martyrdom. God suffers where people suffer. God is always with the one who is suffering. It means that God is with those suffering Korean immigrants under the stress by this strange environment. God works with us to grow through this painful stress.

The pastor helps the troubled person take benefit from stress and distress. Often stress and distress affect people destructively. But stress can be a challenge to persons, and persons can grow through challenge. The pastor needs to help them gain benefit from stress by facilitating growth in the areas of "clarification of values, great determination, modification of daily habits, and new work skills."²

As an ethnic and racial minority, Koreans will remain socially marginal in their relation to the white majority. Potentially negative manifestations of the marginality are cultural ambivalence, fear of social rejection and identity crisis, all resulting in feelings of powerlessness,

¹Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, 1978) p. 159.

²Walt Schafer, Stress, Distress, Growth (Davis: International Dialogue Press, 1977) p. 145.

frustration, and self-degradation.

Marginality, on the other hand, can lead a person or group to be creative, independent, and productive. Depending upon the individual's perspective, a marginal person can become either frustrated or productive.³ Korean immigrants will remain socially marginal as long as their physical appearance remains different to that of the majority. Thus, it is necessary to build a strong defense mechanism in order for those marginal persons to become creative and productive in the system that bestows such marginality.

The pastor needs to help these persons gain high self-esteem. Self-esteem is essential for marginal persons to be creative. "Persons with high self-esteem have a fundamental confidence and respect for their own abilities, recognize their shortcomings and find ways to correct their problems."⁴ When the Koreans are aware of their own identity and proud of their own cultural heritage, they will become more confident as individuals in personality and ability. "A person in marginal status can never become completely free and full without proud of their own roots."⁵

The pastor needs to help those troubled people to accept the stressful reality. However, most sick people among the immigrants do not want to face this painful reality. Rather, they try to escape from

³Eui-Young Yu, "Koreans in America: Social and Economic Adjustments," in Byong-suh Kim and Sang Hyun Lee (eds.) The Korean Immigrant in America, (Montclair: Association of Korean Christian Scholars in North America, 1980) p. 92.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

the pain. They must realize that, as long as they stay in this country, they cannot avoid the pressures. The denial of every form of suffering can result in a flight from reality in which contact with reality becomes ever thinner, ever more fragmentary. It is impossible to remove themselves totally from this stressful reality unless they remove themselves from life itself.

In order to become creative and productive immigrants, they should realize that they are living in a strange environment far from their homeland. I have seen many troubled Koreans living physically in the United States but still living unconsciously or mentally in Korea. Their consciousness tries to confront the new culture by withdrawing from the reality. When they accept the reality from which they cannot and should not escape, their lifestyle will be changed into a positive and creative one. The more strongly they affirm the reality, the more deeply they will be touched by the reality which surrounds them.

Clarifying the stress: What are the stresses? What causes them? How do they play useful and harmful roles in a person's life? How can the person handle them? If we understand the root of stress and its affect on our life, we can prevent harm's inflection by the stress and can react constructively. The pastor needs to help his counselee gain the objectivity to view the problem clearly. Most Korean immigrants, as far as I have seen, are unaware or not fully aware of the precipitating stress and its consequences. They need to be aware of the nature of the threat promptly with clarification of the relevant circumstances and conflicts. Awareness of one's stress situation, its nature and dynamic, helps him or her resolve the distress.

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